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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CRS NR
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 6/7/91
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

SUBJECT: THIEU - KY

REF: SAIGON 26200

1. SINCE DISPATCH REFTEL WE HAVE BEEN SORTING OUT VARIOUS REPORTS OF WHAT HAS AND HAS NOT TRANSPIRED REGARDING THIEU'S CANDIDACY. IF IS CLEAR THAT HE HAS MADE STATEMENTS TO HIS COLLEAGUES AND TO TWO OR MORE JOURNALISTS THAT HE HAS DECIDED TO RUN, BUT HE HAS NOT MADE A FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS CANDIDACY. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHEN HE

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MAY MAKE SUCH A DECLARATION OR PERHAPS EVEN THAT HE WILL MAKE IT, ALTHOUGH MOST INDICATIONS SUGGEST THAT HE WILL DO SO AT SOME STAGE. IT REMAINS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT HIS PRESENT MANEUVERS ARE DESIGNED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE TO BLOCK KY'S PATH AND PERHAPS SECONDARILY TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND A CIVILIAN CANDIDATE.

2. SINCE THIEU'S ACTUAL INTENTIONS AND KY'S POSSIBLE REACTIONS ARE NOT NOW KNOWN, WE ARE PLANNING TO TAKE A NUMBER OF SOUNDINGS WITH PERSONS CLOSE TO BOTH OF THEM, MAKING EVIDENT OUR GRAVE CONCERN AT THESE MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND THE EFFECT THEY MAY HAVE ON OUR POSITION HERE AND SUPPORT BACK HOME FOR OUR EFFORT IN VIET-NAM.

3. I HAD MADE AN APPOINTMENT WITH KY FOR SATURDAY MORNING TO PRESENT SENATOR CASE, BUT THIS WAS CANCELLED THE SAME MORNING, AND MY OFFICE WAS INFORMED THAT HE WOULD BE OUT OF TOWN FOR THE DAY. FOLLOWING THESE INITIAL SOUNDINGS, I AM PLANNING TO SEE BOTH THIEU AND KY, EITHER

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SEPARATELY OR TOGETHER DEPENDING ON WHAT SEEMS BEST AT

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THE TIME, TO STATE OUR VIEWS VERY PLAINLY REGARDING THE UNACCEPTABILITY OF PERSONAL POLITICAL MANEUVERS WHICH MAY SPLIT THE ARMED FORCES BEYOND REPAIR AND FURTHER FRAGMENT THE ALREADY DIVIDED AND COMPETING POLITICAL GROUPS IN THIS COUNTRY. I WILL MAKE PLAIN THAT WE CANNOT HAVE OUR ENORMOUS INVESTMENT OF MEN, MONEY, AND WORLD PRESTIGE PUT INTO QUESTION BY SUCH PERSONAL RIVALRY.

4. AS A FOOTNOTE TO THESE EVENTS, A CONVERSATION WITH NATIONAL POLICE DIRECTOR LOAN AT MID-DAY SATURDAY IS PERHAPS WORTH NOTING.

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IN BRIEF, LOAN SAID THAT, IF THIEU ANNOUNCED HIS CANDIDACY, KY WOULD WITHDRAW, AND HE AND THE PRINCIPAL GENERALS IN THE DIRECTORATE (THANG, TRI, BOTH VIENS, AND KHANG OF II CORPS WERE MENTIONED) WOULD RESIGN ON THE GROUNDS THAT THIEU COULD NOT WIN THE RACE FOR THE PRESIDENCY, AND SUCH A LOSS WOULD BE A SERIOUS AND UNACCEPTABLE LOSS OF PRESTIGE FOR THE ARMED FORCES. WHILE LOAN'S VERSIONS OF EVENTS, BOTH PAST AND FUTURE, MUST ALWAYS BE TAKEN WITH A LARGE GRAIN OF SALT AND THEY ARE NO DOUBT MOTIVATED BY A DESIRE

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TO INFLUENCE OUR OWN ACTIONS, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SUCH THREATS MIGHT BE CONTEMPLATED BY THIS GROUP. BUNKER
NOTE: PASSED S/S-O, WHITE HOUSE, DOD, AND CIA 5/20/67/9:15AM

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